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Songs for a New World

USU Opera Theatre

Jason Robert Brown

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USU Opera Theatre Presents

songs for a new world

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY
JASON ROBERT BROWN

7:30PM | APRIL 8 & 9, 2016

2:00PM | APRIL 9, 2016

Morgan Theatre, Chase Fine Arts Center

"Songs for a New World" is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI, 421 West 54th Street, New York, NY 10019 Tel.: (212) 541-4684 Fax: (212) 397-4684
www.MTIShows.com

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UtahStateUniversity.

USU Opera Theatre presents
SONGS FOR A NEW WORLD

Music and Lyrics by Jason Robert Brown
Originally Produced by the WPA Theatre, New York City, 1995
(Kyle Renick, Artistic Director) Original Orchestration by
Brian Besterman and Jason Robert Brown

Cast

Kimberly Muhlestein
Nicole Vander Does
Rebecca Soelberg
Devin Davis
Jared Campbell
Sean Peters

Orchestra

Piano: Dallas K Heaton
Synthesizer: Camille Decker
Bass: Dylan Cox
Set: Jonathon Kurecki
Percussion: Emily Ashcroft

Production Team

Stage Director	Stefan Espinosa
Musical Director	Dallas K Heaton
Scenic Design	Kyle Stein, Stefan Espinosa
Technical Director	Tim North
Lighting/Sound Designer	Alec Spear
Stage Manager	Camille Harmer
Assistant Stage Manager	Rachael Bangerter
Projections	Rufus ZaeJoDaeus
Costumes Support	Nancy Hills
Choreographer	Katie Francis
Assistant Musical Director	Camille Decker

USU Opera Theatre also gratefully acknowledges the generous contribution of time and resources given by USU Production Services and the USU Department of Theatre Arts.

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The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

Act I

Opening Sequence I: New World
Company

Opening Sequence II: On the
Deck of a Spanish Sailing Ship,
1492

*Devin Davis, Nicole
Vander Does, Company*

Just One Step
Kimberly Muhlestein

Stars and the Moon
Rebecca Soelberg

The River Won't Flow
*Sean Peters, Jared
Campbell, Company*

I'm Not Afraid
Kimberly Muhlestein

She Cries
Sean Peters

The Steam Train
*Jared Campbell,
Devin Davis, Company*

~15 minute intermission~

Act II

The World was Dancing
*Rebecca Soelberg,
Sean Peters, Company*

Surabaya Santa
Kimberly Muhlestein

Christmas Lullaby
Rebecca Soelberg

King of the World
Devin Davis

I'd Give it all for You
*Sean Peters,
Nicole Vander Does*

Flagmaker, 1775
Kimberly Muhlestein

Flying Home
*Jared Campbell,
Company*

Final Transition: New World
*Nicole Vander Does,
Company*

Hear my Song
Company

About USU Opera Theatre:

The USU Opera Theatre is the Caine College of the Art's performing dramatic musical ensemble. Under the direction of Prof. Dallas Heaton, the ensemble produces full shows and scenes of opera, operetta, and musical theater, providing developing singers the opportunity to acquire and refine the skills that singing actors need to be successful, versatile performers and multi-faceted pedagogues. We invite you to join us next year as we present Mozart's rarely heard opera *La finta giardiniera*. Find more details online:
<http://opera.usu.edu!>

Director's Note:

"It's about one moment..."

What is *Songs for a New World*? Technically it is considered more a song cycle than a true musical - meaning that it's a sequence of individual songs that are connected thematically, somewhat akin to a musical revue, except without sketches. In the case of *Songs for a New World*, we have a series of songs all written by one of the most prolific composers of the late 20th Century, Jason Robert Brown, and all dealing with people standing at crossroads in their lives. In the opening prologue of the show, Brown doesn't introduce us to characters or plotlines, but rather prepares us for the ideas of the show; the moments in our lives when the ground shifts beneath us, the winds suddenly change, the skies grow dark, and we lose our way. As I said, there are no pre-defined characters (the *dramatis personae* consists of "Man" and "Woman") and no overarching plot, but there are a great many complex but connecting themes spun through each song that weave them together in a vibrant picture of humanity. This is, in fact, one of my favorite aspects of the piece; the characters in each song are so terribly human. Full of contradictions and little paradoxes, they struggle on the brink of literal or metaphorical annihilation, fighting to find their way in a world that is fraught with possibilities and dangers known and unknown.

In this production, I endeavored to create an environment for this song-cycle to live in that is both abstract and evocative of the show's themes, and what I came up with was a mental playground; an abstract place given a literal form. This is a representative place inside our minds where we try and reconcile what we grew up "knowing" and what we "know" now. The place we wish we could go back to; a place of simplicity and clarity, before the endless complexities of the world turned us inside-out. The characters you will meet are written intentionally to be specific and detailed in their humanity, but the edges of them are left fuzzy, and their stories are kept slightly blurry in order to leave room for us, the audience, to find ourselves. I look at these characters as aspect of all of us...parts of our psyche, reflections of our own experiences, hopes, fears, dreams, wishes, and deep needs - all fighting through the crises of adult life. Like any good play, it's about conflict and struggle, however, ultimately, this is a play about hope and survival. For better or worse each character emerges from the other side of darkness, and by doing so they bring us the message that we can do the same...we can survive the journey to the new world.

Enough from me! I began with a quote from the show, and I will also end with one: "I don't like to philosophize, I just want to tell a story." So please enjoy this series of poignant stories, performed beautifully by a talented group of young artists. Plus Dallas Heaton.

-Stefan Espinosa, Director

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Caine College of the Arts serves the people of the State of Utah and supports the mission of Utah State University by cultivating artistic and academic excellence; by preparing our students to realize their full creative potential as artists and citizens; by increasing the visibility of the college and university; and by fostering professionalism and collegial relationships in all aspects of our operations.